

Advocate

Connect Unite Succeed



The newsletter of the
Owen J. Roberts
School District

May 2016

Inspiring Each Student for Success Today and Greatness Tomorrow

Message from Superintendent Michael Christian



Each spring, our students participate in the federally mandated tests in reading, math and science. There has been growing concern in recent years about the quantity of federally mandated tests which our students endure. These rigorous assessments were a

requirement of the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. In 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act which enacts some changes from the aforementioned NCLB. However, one area that has not changed for the next four years is the federal requirement that states administer standardized tests to students at specific grade levels.

At Owen J. Roberts, we have continually stated that we understand our obligation in this era of accountability. Our students have demonstrated continued growth in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment in grades 3-8 over the past three years. That being said, these assessments are only a small portion of a student's academic record.

As a district, our focus is to create an educational experience which promotes ample opportunity for personal growth. Constantly seeking balance, we continue to support well-rounded students who demonstrate success in a variety of areas including, but not limited to: the arts and humanities, project-based assessments, writing across the curriculum, science and math, performance assessments and, yes, standardized tests. We strive to offer a deep and wide curriculum which fosters collaboration and high levels of critical thinking. Our schools are working constantly on promoting health, wellbeing, character development and social-emotional growth. Our teaching and learning is not confined to simply succeeding on standardized assessments.

While we have enjoyed success in the required assessments such as the PSSA and Keystone exams, it pales in comparison to the pride we have in our students' growth and achievements in other areas. This newsletter, which contains only a small sampling of activities, is teeming with examples of how students of all ages are demonstrating profound leadership skills (*Choosing Kindness*, pg. 2 and *Students Lead Assembly*, pg. 8). Students are building confidence on the stage and in competitive problem-solving arenas (*Skilled Acting*, pg. 2, *Modern Millie*, pg. 6, and *Odyssey Breaks Records*, pg. 5). They are learning the value of perseverance, succeeding at learning to work collaboratively and becoming capable communicators (*Proud DARE Grads* and *PHL17*, pg. 3, *Students Lead Assembly* and *Engineering Bait*, pg. 8, and *Science Research*, pg. 5). We can be exceptionally proud of our students who are working to strengthen our communities through service learning (*THON Shatters Ceiling* and *Giving the Boot*, pg. 7). During these weeks of testing, and throughout the school year, please join me in celebrating all the ways Owen J. Roberts students grow, learn, and succeed.

School Taking Shape at East Vincent

Students at East Vincent Elementary School love sneak peeks of the new 85,800 square foot building under construction at the far west portion of the site behind the existing school. Despite winter weather challenges, much progress has been made on the new East Vincent Elementary School project:

- The building foundation work has been completed.
- The steel structure is about 60% complete.
- The underground utilities installation is 75% complete.
- The masonry work for the exterior wall has started.
- The roof installation is now underway.

Spring weather conditions mean the pace of progress has picked up dramatically. With the installation of the roof and wall construction starting, opportunity will open up work for many other trades and allow an increase in manpower on the jobsite. Work is being performed in a continuous cycle, not waiting for one section to be completed prior to starting the next. It is going to be a very busy spring and summer!

The new educational design will have three wings, and two floors. The design reflects Chester County with an exterior of brick with stone accent features.



The staff, teachers and students are excited that the new school is designed to support student achievement. There will be ample and flexible classroom spaces, an equipped science lab and large and small group instruction spaces to support reading, speech, math, and other customized learning. Technology will be integrated throughout to support the modern learner now and into the future. The project is targeted for winter 2016/2017 move in. Follow the progress in the About Us section of the district website.

East Coventry Elementary Project

The East Coventry Elementary School project continues to move forward. The East Coventry Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors approved the Preliminary Land Development Plans on Monday, April 11, 2016. The district is grateful to township supervisors for continuing to work toward the shared prosperity of a project which is fiscally responsible, supports student success, and is a positive impact to the community.

With a love of literacy at the forefront, the media center will be the focal point of the new East Coventry Elementary School featuring an outdoor reading court planned to be accessible from both the media center and art classroom. The building is proposed to be 85,800 square feet. It will be constructed on East Cedarville Road, on property contiguous to the existing site. The front of the

building will run parallel to East Cedarville Road with the main office, media center, and computer classroom housed on the first floor. Classroom wings will extend from both sides of the main entrance area utilizing two floors. The back of the building will house the cafeteria, stage, gymnasium, music, art, health and guidance. Best practice in school security has been addressed by featuring a number of security measures including electronic locks, a secure entrance, monitored doors and multiple cameras.

The school, like the new East Vincent building, will be constructed as a non-combustible structure with steel frame, masonry shell, and efficient HVAC systems. The HVAC systems will run off gas fuel, which was run to the site in 2014. The building

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Skilled Acting, Sandy Silliness

In their fifth year, and third year for a Craig Hawes play, French Creek Elementary helped audiences discover a treasure trove of fun and laughter in the mystical musical comedy—“Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits!” 55 students in grades 4 through 6 were involved with the play this year, which was performed March 18 and 19. No matter what the challenge, missed line or prop, this group of kids was reportedly amazing at working together and helping each other out. The elementary actors visited the cast of the High School musical (Thoroughly Modern Mille) during one of their rehearsals for tips on everything from making one’s voice carry to dealing with stage fright. French Creek parent volunteer and co-directors Michelle Fisher and Tammy Muir said, “We are always so worried that it won’t come together

but the kids never cease to amaze us on opening night when they hit every mark and remember every line.” In recent years, the school has also performed “Pirates of the Curry Bean” and “Porridge”, finding that writer Craig Hawes delivers the right amount of acting and music for elementary students. The script was modified so that every student could speak and sing. Ali Baba featured six show-stopping songs with four solos and a sprinkle of sparkle from a genius genie. For more than four months, the group rehearsed twice a week for two hours and then every day the last week. A great team of volunteers managed set, props, and costumes to stage an Arabian night full of fun and laughter which audiences would not forget.



Choosing Kindness

West Vincent Elementary School challenged students and staff to Choose to Be Kind. In library class, students discussed how not many people will admit to being a bully, but we can all admit to sometimes being unkind. If each of us would simply choose to be kind each day, it could make a HUGE difference in the world. Every single student, teacher, and staff member participated in making a video. All scripts, choreography, and planning were organized by the sixth grade students, with the help of their librarian, Mrs. Riggs. Sixth graders auditioned for spots in the lip dub and skit, memorized their lines, and worked on their dance moves. Every student in the building helped create posters during their library classes as part of their digital citizenship lessons. Each class practiced with Mrs. Riggs, and the sixth grade participants spent two weeks of their recess time running through the lip dub. The entire building helped make this a truly memorable event for West Vincent Elementary. The school community hopes to spread the word that being kind is a choice we should all make. View the video on the school website or at <https://youtu.be/rGTphrMVNiY>

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East Coventry Elementary Project

will be designed to meet current codes. New play areas will be developed. The District is in the process of obtaining necessary governmental agency approvals for the project. Fall 2016 is the anticipated construction start date, working toward anticipated winter 2017/2018 move-in. A fly-over 3-D schematic of the new school may be found on the district website in the About Us section.

The school district has been paying attention to aging East Coventry and East Vincent buildings and systems since 2004, saving incrementally for these projects over the past decade. District’s Chief Financial Officer Jaclin Krumrine noted, “The only immediate tax impact will be those indirect costs associated with maintenance of the building. Avoiding the issuance of debt will save the district enormous interest costs over the next 25 years.”



Meet the New SAT

The CollegeBoard SAT, a globally recognized college admission test, has been redesigned and was first administered in March 2016. The redesigned SAT test is reported to prioritize content that reflects the kind of reading and math students will encounter in college and future work. Owen J. Roberts High School has been actively preparing students and families for success with the new format. As part of many measures in place to inform and prepare students and families, the high school guidance department held a workshop for students and parents outlining the new SAT, providing resources and answering questions. Highlights of the new SAT:

- Return to 1600 point scale from 2400
- Essay now optional
- Fewer, longer sections (now 4 sections plus essay)
- Guessing penalty removed; students earn points for correct answers
- Free comprehensive test prep materials available through Khan Academy
- PSSAs and Keystone tests require similar thinking and follow same structure/prompting as new SAT, so students are being actively prepared through Owen J. Roberts curriculum.

Proud D.A.R.E. Graduates



“Our students face challenges we may never have faced,” said Corporal Paul Holliday, addressing a crowd of nearly 100 supporters who attended the 2016 Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (D.A.R.E.) graduation celebration at North Coventry Elementary School on April 5. Corporal Holliday congratulated 93 graduates of the program which has a goal of empowering children to lead safe and healthy lives. It was the 19th North Coventry D.A.R.E. class facilitated by Corporal Holliday and the 22nd graduating D.A.R.E. class at the school. For 12 years, North Coventry Police Department has provided the 10-week long program to the students of North Coventry Elementary School. Each year, Corporal Holliday and his wife supply each student with a workbook and certificate of graduation. As part of the program, students are required to write an essay. Each essay is reviewed and a class winning essay is selected. Four students read their essays at the celebration and reiterated themes of anti-bullying, resisting peer pressures and remaining drug and violence free.

Diverse Literature



A photo of East Coventry Elementary Kindergarten students appeared in the national publication, NEA Today, on March 28. Reading Specialist Jennifer Hunter reported that a primary focus of her teaching has always been to expose students to award-winning, diverse literature. Ezra Jack Keats’ “A Snowy Day” was the first book awarded the prestigious Caldecott Medal which featured a main character who is African American. Ms. Hunter originally sent a few photos of her students with “A Snowy Day” to the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation and the Foundation posted the photos on their website. Then, in honor of his 100th birthday, the National Education Association (NEA) decided to run a story on Ezra Jack Keats and publishers of NEA Today selected the photo from her classroom to go with their story. According to the NEA feature, Ezra Jack Keats was the son of Polish immigrants who identified with those of different races and cultures. His works helped to transform children’s literature in ways which allowed more children to see themselves in stories. <http://neatoday.org/2016/03/28/ezra-jack-keats-day/>

OJR on PHL17



The Owen J. Roberts Parent Technology Series was featured in a full 30-minute segment on PHL 17. Owen J. Roberts School Psychologist, Dr. Brian Schneider, and Director of Technology, Mr. Paul Sanfrancesco, were on the set with News Anchor Jennifer Lewis-Hall helping parents navigate the safekeeping of students when students are using digital media. Mr. Sanfrancesco explained why it’s so important for the school district to partner with parents and defined sexting and cyberbullying. He explains that many of us, students included, are naïve when it comes to our digital footprint. We need to educate ourselves to guide children as we are really learning together. Ms. Lewis-Hall asked about hidden traps, Apps, and what parents need to know. Dr. Schneider addressed social media as a benefit with inherent risks for which we all need to manage. He talked about who is vulnerable for cyber-bullying and provided strategies to safeguard children. The TV segment may be accessed in the Highlights section of the district website. The 2015-16 Parent Technology Series began with a primer for parents in the fall. In March, high school students provided a social media hands-on workshop. Parents were able to ask targeted questions and students spoke frankly about the social media culture and uses. A final technology showcase is being planned for spring.

Fire and Ice



The 2016 Post Prom Fashion Show, February 19, was an evening of sizzling entertainment and cool fashion for a good cause. The show is an amazing partnership of the high school PTSA and community businesses and organizations working to provide students with an exciting, safe and social environment to continue the evening of fun after Prom. This year’s post-prom party will be a Spirit of Philadelphia cruise.

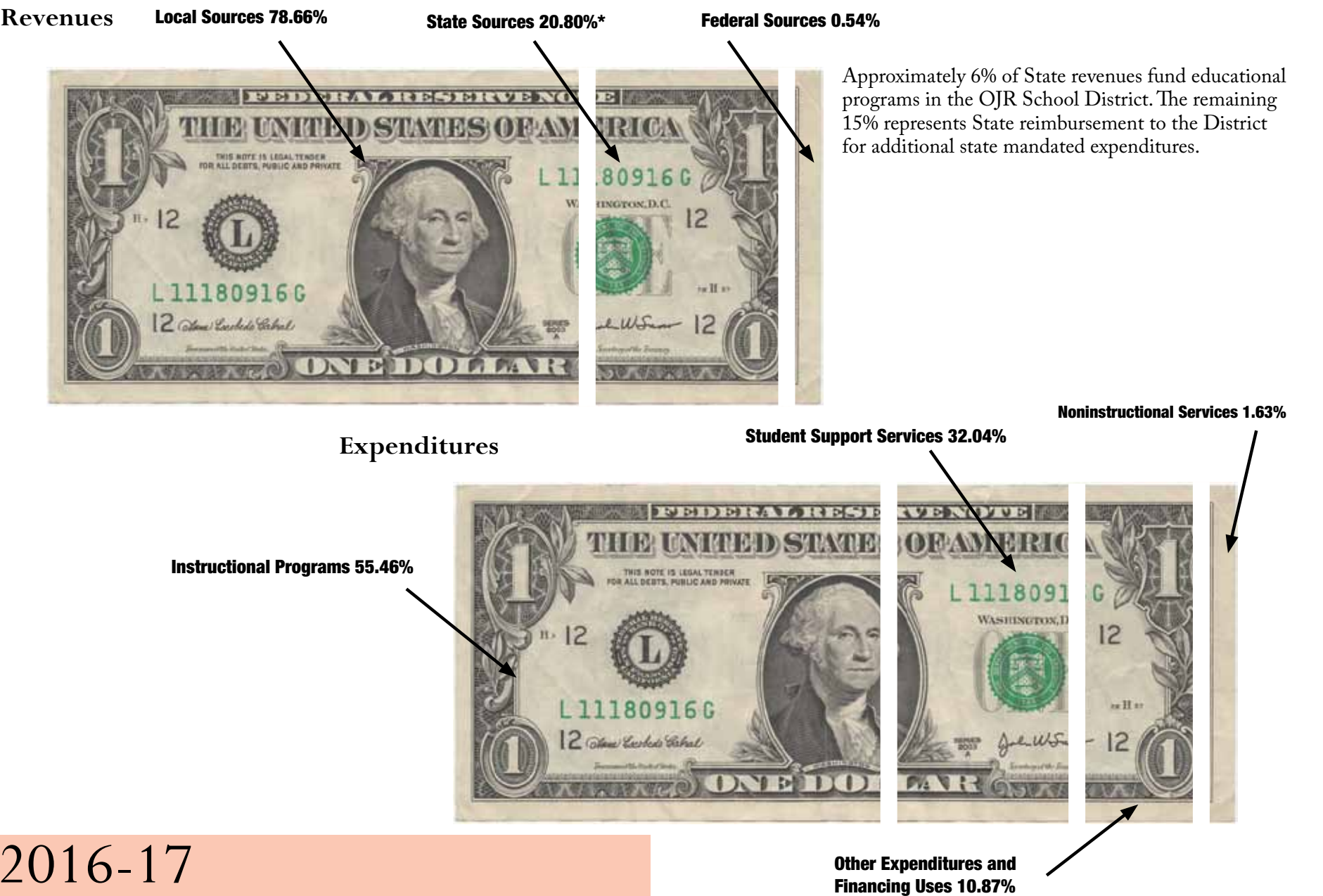
State Budget Impasse and Impacts

This was a year full of budget wrangles at the state level leaving Pennsylvania school districts to face funding uncertainties. After a nearly 9-month impasse, on March 27, 2016, Governor Tom Wolf, who did not believe the 2015-16 budget appropriations bill was properly funded, acted to allow general appropriations and non-preferred appropriations bills to become law

without his signature. Citing many problems with the Fiscal Code, Governor Wolf vetoed companion legislation which amended the Fiscal Code to provide for implementation and distribution of state education funds in accordance with a fair funding formula recommended by a bi-partisan Basic Education Funding Commission. The Wolf Administration planned to distribute

the funding provided in the general appropriations bill. Then on April 13, the House and Senate cast veto-proof majority votes to pass HB1589 which would require those dollars be distributed using the Basic Education Funding Commission-recommended formula. HB 1589 was allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, which puts the 2015-2016 budget one step closer to resolution.

There are still hurdles, however, especially in regards to PlanCon reimbursements. Meanwhile, the June 30, 2016 deadline to adopt a 2016-17 State Budget nears. According to the District's Chief Financial Officer Jaclin Krumrine, "This puts school districts in the impossible position of having to adopt a budget for 2016-17 without seeing a full state budget for 2016-17. We are in uncharted territory."



2016-17 School District Budget

Although State and Federal support for education has consistently declined over the last two decades, sound financial planning has enabled Owen J. Roberts School District to keep tax increases at or below the Act 1 Index for the last nine (9) years. In spite of the recent State Budget crisis, the District is able to keep the 2016-17 tax increase to 2.8%. The 2016-17 Proposed General Fund Operating Budget is \$98,627,641 which maintains all current educational programs and provides additional opportunities for expanded programming in the engineering field to meet the needs of the 21st century. Budget presentations, thorough financial reports, and the district's 2016-17 proposed budget may be found on the district website in the Business and Finance Department section.

Summer Enrichment

Hello summer!

The Owen J. Roberts School District is excited to announce a variety of enrichment opportunities open to all students within the community from June 14 through August 11. From fishing, crafts, sports, and STEM to serious academics, there are plenty of exciting activities from which to choose. Registration is open and will run through Thursday, May 26, 2016, or until sessions are full. Our summer opportunities are self-supporting and can only be offered with sufficient enrollment. There are three ways to register for programs including an exciting new online registration feature eFunds for Schools. Check out the district website for details and registration materials.



Literature Comes Alive by Amber Benson, High School English Teacher

Every year, seniors at OJR are challenged in their English courses with a variety of literary pieces and styles, ranging in thematic content and social commentary. Of those works, both *The Things They Carried*, by novelist Tim O'Brien, and *The Long Road Home*, by former White House correspondent Martha Raddatz, powerfully chronicle the immediate and lasting impacts of war on the human spirit. O'Brien's writing speaks to the deeply conflicted nature of Vietnam, while Raddatz offers a thrilling nonfictional account of Black Sunday in Sadr City, Iraq in 2004.

To help bridge the gap between these narratives and the experiences which compel them, seniors were offered the opportunity to speak with two veterans who have remarkable stories and histories of their own. After their reading of *The Things They Carried*, Master Gunnery Sergeant Andrew Worley joined them for a day of presentations regarding his experience as a soldier in Vietnam. Part of special operations for the Navy, Master

Gunns trained alongside SEAL teams in preparation for his deployment, where his duties were varied and intense. In recognition for his service, which extended well beyond the period of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and continues in his work with OJR's JROTC program today, he earned many medals, including multiple Valor Vs and Purple Hearts.

Students switch gears a bit in preparation for the reading of Raddatz's *Long Road Home* with Sergeant First Class Charles Kelly's visit. SFC Kelly served overseas, first in Kosovo and then in Iraq, as a soldier in the Army National Guard. In this role, he was able to engage in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, focusing on making a positive change despite the dangers and difficulties surrounding him in combat. On the home front, SFC Kelly also served in New Orleans in 2005 to help manage the devastation left behind by Hurricane Katrina. Currently, he remains involved in the OJR community as a recruiter, helping many students find successful paths to accomplishing their goals when they graduate.



Both speakers delivered powerful, honest accounts of a soldier's experience, leaving students with a stronger and truer grasp of how war largely affects the societies who engage in it. Although these two conflicts span decades, students are able to better understand the complexities of war, its impacts on an individual, and the remarkable bonds and struggles that tie our servicemen together, regardless

of the ways and wars in which they serve. As a result of the literature they read and veterans they met, students work to become more informed and critical voters, and through the efforts of Mr. Schwenk and the Chester County League of Women Voters, they also had an opportunity to register to vote during a voter registration drive at the high school.

Odyssey Breaks Records

A record 12 teams of Owen J. Roberts students competed in the Odyssey of the Mind regional contest at Millersville University in March: three high school teams, four middle school teams and five elementary teams. All 12 of our competing district teams placed in the top three in their division, and a record 10 of the 12 teams moved on to compete in the state finals contest having earned a first or second place finish at Millersville. First place winners/regional champions included French Creek, East Coventry, and East Vincent Elementary Schools, the Middle School Vehicle Design and Humorous Drama teams, along with all three competing High School teams. Second place finishers were North Coventry Elementary and the Middle School "Classics Problem" team. Teams placing third were the West Vincent Vehicle Design team and Middle School structural engineering team. These teams worked diligently all year in order to excel as creative problem solvers.

The 10 competing Owen J. Roberts teams exercised their creativity and

teamwork at the Odyssey of the Mind State Finals Competition held on Saturday, April 2, at Moon Area High School in Moon, PA. East Vincent's engineering team placed first, making them state champions. French Creek Elementary was second place in their problem. The North Coventry Elementary team also took a second place, and the East Coventry Elementary team captured third place. The high school drama team took second place. The engineering team placed third, and the third competing high school team finished in fifth place. The three competing middle school teams took a fourth, fifth, and ninth place finishes.

All first and second place teams will move on to contend at Iowa State University where more than 800 teams from around the world will compete in the 37th Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, the largest international creative problem-solving competition worldwide in May. Teams competing in Worlds represent the best of the best creative minds and we wish our competitors continued fun and success.

Annual Craft Show



Photo by Jessica Marzella

Owen J. Roberts Friends of the Arts held their 36th annual juried craft sale the first weekend of March. For the past few years, student artwork has been exhibited. This is a great opportunity for the public to experience the talents of our students and also a great venue for students to shine. Friends of the Arts is entering its fourth decade of supporting the arts for students and community of the Owen J. Roberts School District. You can learn more about this vital organization in the Community section of the district website.

Science Research Problem Solvers

Science research projects are at the heart of problem-solving. Practicing the steps of the scientific method allows a student up to discover, document and make a case over an extended period of time. In addition to mastering these important life skills, participation in science research competitions may lead to distinctions and prizes. Competitions at the regional and international level can offer significant prize money and scholarships—especially for high school students. According to their website, the Delaware Valley Science

Fair (DVSF) presents over \$2,000,000 in awards and scholarships.

Owen J. Roberts students at the elementary and middle school levels may choose to compete at their school's event and each of our schools has enthusiastic participation. At the high school level, interest in competing in science research competition is growing just as the importance of science literacy is expanding in our present world.

From the school-level science competitions, five promising projects may advance to the Chester County

Science Research Competition where over 500 aspiring scientists compete annually. In the past years, Owen J. Roberts students have performed exceedingly well at the county level; more than 33 students received awards at this year's County Competition. Qualifying projects proceed to the tri-state DVSF.

First year high school participants, Kaitlyn Fluharty and Audrey Farnham, Grade 9, took BEST OF SHOW at Chester County advancing to win the American Meteorological Society Award at the DVSF. Other

Del Val winners were Jonathan Arditi who won third place in Biochemistry, a Future Scientist/USDA Award, and the NANO/BIO Interface Center Award. Kendra Melniczek received a first place medal in Botany and Zoe Zabrenski placed third in Zoology. Both Kendra and Zoe also won Broadcom MASTERS Middle School Awards and are invited to compete at the Broadcom MASTERS. The Broadcom MASTERS is often compared to the "middle school version of the International Science Fair".

Puppet Personalities

Seventh and eighth grade students who participate in the crafts elective course at the Middle School learn how to make a puppet using a sequential approach. The final products are unique and full of personality. Part of the task analysis involves: pinning a pattern to the fur, cutting the fur, threading a needle, tying off a knot, making a dart, combing the fur, constructing a mouth, gluing and decorating. Senior workers assist instructor Ingrid Fake in preparing puppet bags in advance. The project is considered one of the highlights of the program. Eventually, Mrs. Fake would like to use tablet computers to highlight the performance aspect of the program. You can see photos of the puppets and other amazing middle school artwork on the Pinterest page: www.pinterest.com/ingridfake/



Thoroughly Modern Millie by Darcy Harris, Grade 12, adapted from *The Gavel*

Thoroughly Modern Millie was performed at the High School in early March. This musical comprised mainly of solos and duets, demonstrated Owen J. Roberts diverse vocal talent on stage. The audience was transported to the 1920's in a musical about a young country girl trying to find her way in the big city. This musical tackled the complications that abound in being caught between marrying for romance versus for money and also the issue of human trafficking. The lavish costumes and parties were Gastby-esque, and many literature lovers were reminded of that classic with its distinct air of decadence and excitement. Altogether, it was a great performance and beautifully executed by the talented actors of Owen J. Roberts, and left the audience with a happier ending than any version of Gatsby ever could.

Note: Students used the venue of the show to call attention to and raise money to help combat the very real problem of human trafficking.



Clean Your Closets and Fund Innovation



Photo by Jessica Marzella

The OJR Education Foundation's Children's Consignment Sale is an excellent opportunity to earn money for gently used items and to raise funds that are directed back into OJR classrooms through the Education Foundation. The Ed Foundation funds projects that are innovative in nature and represent a fundamental advance in the manner in which curriculum is taught. They award mini grants for educational materials and supplies, computers, software, scientific or mathematical equipment, field trips, and other uses as part of innovative educational initiatives. The Foundation has partnered with the Owen J. Roberts Technology Department to bring more iPads into classrooms. Mark your calendars to shop, volunteer, or consign in the next sale which will be held on September 10, 2016.

Wee Wildcats



The Owen J. Roberts High School Family and Consumer Sciences department is looking forward to filling another pre-school class in the Spring of 2017. Preschool Lab Experience provides an opportunity for high school students to reinforce learning through observation and direct contact with young children under teacher supervision. Intended to strengthen student knowledge of child development and promote leadership and service skills, the community is invited to join in on this exciting journey. Twelve community children (ages 3 ½ -4 ½) will be selected to participate in the student-run Wee Wildcats preschool. Visit <http://www.ojrdsd.com/Page/5909> or email Ms. Lindsay Hale, LHale@ojrsd.com for more details.

THON Shatters Ceiling

Owen J. Roberts High School hosted a mini-THON on February 27. Mini-THON is a year-long, student-run philanthropy effort raising money to find a cure for pediatric cancer. The event is a twelve-hour dance marathon held in high schools across the country. The mini-THON is a no-sit, no-sleep marathon where students stand for those who cannot! A smaller version of Penn State University's event, the mini-THON raises money to support the Four Diamonds Fund, an organization that provides financial support to families affected by pediatric cancer. The first year, the mini-THON at Owen J. Roberts High School raised \$8,571.25. Last year students raised \$32,717, and this year students raised more than \$50,000!



Sparkling Love of Art



Visual art can engage us in very personal ways allowing us to connect, understand and explore perceptions and creativity. Elementary students at Owen J. Roberts School District have a unique opportunity each year to have an art museum experience in their own art class through Art Goes to School (AGTS). AGTS is a nonprofit organization that for the past 50 years has worked to present a wide-ranging, rotating portfolio of art to the Delaware Valley's elementary students. The Owen J Roberts Art Goes to School chapter is one of over 50 school districts that participate in the program. Owen J. Roberts School District has participated for more than 30 years bringing the richness of visual arts appreciation to all of our elementary schools.

Art Goes to School is staffed exclusively by volunteers and is funded, in part, by the Owen J. Roberts Friends of the Arts organization. AGTS volunteers start each new school year by researching pieces from rotating portfolios and presenting findings to fellow members. Then, volunteers share their knowledge engaging students to open up and explore the gallery together. The greater AGTS membership gathers several times a year to share ideas and information sometimes visiting various art venues (occasionally with free, exclusive access). Find out more at <http://artgoestoschoolojr.myfreesites.net/gallery>

Giving the Boot

For the second year in a row the Middle School Leo Club joined the Coventry Lions Club in a joint project for the local non-profit organization In Ian's Boots (iniansboots.org). In Ian's Boots provides shoes and boots to those in need. Leo Club advisor, Kira Rumpp, had several members of her club join half a dozen Lions members for a project at the newly-relocated In Ian's Boots' Shoe Box.

The previous month High School Leos helped move the contents from the former Ian's Boots location to the new space, a small warehouse located in North Coventry on Route 100. Following that move, the job the Leos and Lions had before them was to clean the warehouse shelving units and reorganize the existing shoes, boots and sneakers. This turned into quite a task as the warehouse was still being set up and other donations were waiting to be cleaned, separated and catalogued.

Before beginning the service of organizing the relocated footwear, the Leos used a large handcart to bring in the shoe supplies they had brought with them from their "New and Slightly Used Shoe Drive" which they held prior to the service date. These shoes will find new owners from all parts of the world.

Good News Every Day

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Heart of Learning

On February 24, at the Owen J. Roberts High School, Citadel representatives awarded High School teacher and student government advisor, Ms. Natalie Smith, the Citadel Heart of Learning Finalist Award for Owen J. Roberts School District.

The Citadel Heart of Learning Award was developed by Citadel and the Chester County Intermediate Unit 14 years ago to recognize, reward and thank the outstanding teachers we have in Chester County. The program has grown in such popularity that Citadel receives thousands of heartfelt nominations each year. This year, over 2,000 nominations were submitted with 107 outstanding Owen J. Roberts teachers among them. The District congratulates all OJR nominees; a

complete list may be found on the district website.

Ms. Smith accepted the award, which included a custom blown glass trophy created by Glasslight Studio in St. Peter's Village. She accepted, complementing the entire High School staff by saying, "Twelve years ago I made a decision to join the Owen J. Roberts team. It was the best decision I could ever have made both professionally and personally because I get to work with so many talented and helpful people." An excerpt from one of the nominations describing outstanding kindness Ms. Smith demonstrated to students was read. Ms. Smith will receive a \$500 award to purchase supplies or other items for her classroom. In May, finalists from all school districts in Chester County will gather at the banquet for final awards.

Exploring Comic Authorship



Upon the author's visit to the Middle School, Mr. Skip Winter enjoyed telling students that he had once played Wildcat basketball with their Assistant Principal, Mr. Corbin Stoltzfus during his school years at Owen J. Roberts (Class of 1989). He also told students, "I didn't realize how important Language Arts was when I was your age." He went on to encourage students to apply themselves to be strong communicators. Mr. Winter reported that his comic book series, Unit 5, which gives back to first responders, is the only cause-related comic book in the world.

Students Lead Assembly

During the third trimester, the sixth grade students at East Vincent Elementary School complete a guidance rotation under the direction of the school counselor, Mrs. Quinn. This is one of a number of opportunities to build leadership in students as decision-making, goal-setting, middle school scheduling, considerations in using social media, and many other topics are addressed.

To start the trimester, the 6th grade students immediately took on the project of delivering a character assembly and mini-pep rally prior to PSSA testing. Students wrote the scripts, which included live performances and videos demonstrating their understanding of what it means to be caring and trustworthy as well as how to prepare for tests that are given over a series of days. The staff was proud of them as they demonstrated their exceptional talents and their ability to use digital

tools to set their work apart from the ordinary.

At the assembly, K-6 students were recognized by grade level in the areas of caring and trustworthiness as were all students achieving perfect attendance in trimester 2. It was a celebration!

The work the students did was captured in a PowerPoint, which will continue to be utilized by staff throughout the PSSA testing window to provide tips to reduce stress and how to deal with challenges. The goal was to help all students “show their best selves” throughout the testing period. Below are some of the tips for how students can show their best selves:

- Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd graders:
- Share positive thoughts with the older students.

- Be encouraging. Say things like “You got this!” or “I think you are awesome!”
- Remember to stay quiet in the halls and make good choices.
- Share a SMILE!!!!

3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th graders:

- Believe in yourself. You have been preparing for this for years!
- This is just part of all the ways you get to show what you know.
- Remember that everyone has strengths and everyone has areas where they have room to grow.



- Channel feelings of stress into excitement and motivation!
- Use strategies and tools to focus and stay calm.
- Make healthy choices: lots of sleep, healthy food choices, exercise!!!

Engineering Bait

In its first year at the high school, the Introduction to Engineering course has introduced STEAM topics to students by learning and utilizing the basics of design. Nearly 70 students are enrolled in the course which is designed to foster teamwork and effective communication. Working on a fishing lure project since the beginning of the school year, students have been immersed in research and analysis and have learned through experience how to apply the engineering and design process to solve a problem.

The learning journey for the fishing lure project has allowed for collaboration, communication, planning, designing and constructing ideas. Students have gained technical expertise in the basics of design. Their studies and knowledge application have given them a foundation in Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) as

well as an introduction to some pretty cool tools.

To kick off the project, co-teachers William Richardson and William Crowl took students fishing. The fishing experience led students to identify an issue common to many amateur fishermen - a disappointing catch. Having identified a problem, inquiry then drove the research phase. Students learned what types of bait attract specific fish. They analyzed lures manufactured by various makers and explored relevant data. Students were then immersed in the design phase of the project, which included materials research. Every phase of the project was technically documented using engineering standards to create good physical evidence of their work to produce an honors-level portfolio. In addition to the portfolio, students created beautiful, detailed fishing lures



worthy of display in the high school art show.

The engineering program will continue to expand next year with a Principles of Engineering course, which incorporates a more

mathematical design perspective using CADD. Additionally, Biotech and Ecology courses are being offered as new elective science coursework to support additional STEAM topics.

Go Wildcats! Noted Accomplishments in Athletics and Other Arenas

Congratulations to Daniel Horning for qualifying for the PMEA Regional Band Festival. Congratulations to Daniel DiMarino and Leigh Magness for qualifying for the PMEA Region 6 Orchestra Festival. Congratulations to the following high school choral students for qualifying for the PMEA Region 6 Choral Festival: Daniel DiMarino, Leah Muthler, Tristan Fish, Kaiden Roberts, Madison Frederick, Conrad Sager, Cheyenne Hails, Michael Styer and Michelle Intoccia.

Congratulations to the high school boys swimming and diving team members for winning the PAC-10 Congratulations to the following members of the high school swimming and diving team who have qualified for the PIAA State Championship Meet: Morgan Aicher, Laurel Fink, Madison

Gadzicki, Morgan Hansen, Logan Baker, Colin Bauer, Simon Crew, and Alec Schneider.

Congratulations to Zach Foreman and Nicole MacMullin for receiving an award at the Montgomery County Community College Third Annual Tri-County Art Exhibition.

The “Bio Builders” from East Vincent Elementary School competed in the Penn FLL Championship and placed second in robot strategy and innovation. They applied superior robot skills, especially as a rookie team. The team included: Alystair Hemberger, Liam Silli, Reilly Koitszch, Jack Snyder, Katja Larsen, Norah Turley, Joey Shea and Cali VanDruff.

Anita Zuberecz (12th) won the state illustration competition in the

PSPA (Pennsylvania School Press Association) Student Journalism State Championship, Penn State (University Park). Anita had to create an illustration based on a poem about Penn State.

The Maxwell football award is given to sixty-one players selected from high schools located in Districts 1,3,11 and 12. Owen J. Roberts is proud to congratulate Mitch Bradford for winning this award.

Congratulations to Dan Mancini, Xavier Ferrizzi and Ryan Resnick for taking first place in the Pioneer Athletic Conference Wrestling Championships. Congratulations to Dan Mancini for winning the Outstanding Wrestling award at the Championship and to Xavier Ferrizzi for competing in the PIAA State Wrestling Championships.



DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. There are 3,500 high school chapters. Twenty-six Owen J. students placed in the top three at the regional DECA competition and qualified to move on to join the international Career Development Conference in Nashville, TN with students from every U.S. state, China, Guam, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Spain.